

Spring 2007

Volume 1, Issue 2

Magic Valley Region



IDAHO FISH AND GAME

preserve • protect • perpetuate



Volunteer News

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Perhaps you're reading this, our spring newsletter, and thinking, "Seems like summer to me." Well, you're not mistaken. Mother Nature selected her weather of choice and Father Time squeezed April and May into what has seemed like two weeks. At the time of this writing, I must assume you may be reading this edition as late as June.

That's fine with us, because it means we've been busy here...in a good way. In fact, spring will probably always be the busiest season for this region's volunteer programs. To find out why, direct your attention to the "Hat's Off" article in this newsletter. There you'll learn about springtime accomplishments and, more importantly, the volunteers who made them possible.

Read "Anatomy Of A Volunteer" to discover who these folks are and where they come from (NOTE: If you are a volunteer, you already know these things). Taken together these two

articles remind us that PEOPLE are the heart and soul of any successful program.

"Recipe For A Volunteer Project" discusses other ingredients that go into the creation of an Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game volunteer project.

And upcoming projects (read "Citizen Seed Harvest") demonstrate that every recipe can be adjusted...hopefully with success.

Hopefully, this issue of *Volunteer News* will inspire some of you to volunteer or collaborate in developing a project. You see, we have fewer project listings as summer approaches, because we've been quite busy with what we have. But it's all been worth it. After all, time flies when you're having fun.



The Donohos demonstrate the art of planting bitterbrush...while having fun.

Special points of interest:

- **Volunteers run amok in Magic Valley. Shocking photos on page 2!**
- **Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game plans sting operation to apprehend unruly bitterbrush seeds. Details on page 4!**

Anatomy Of A Volunteer

Who are these people, anyway? Who would spend a Saturday planting shrubs or looking for birds (perhaps getting their vehicle stuck in the process)? Why would anyone want to perform work for nothing?

Well, nobody. Nobody does volunteer work for nothing. They may not be looking for money, but they always come for something.

Some folks come to be part of a group effort. Conservation groups, church groups, schools, 4-H clubs, and scout troops all volunteer on

Fish & Game projects. And don't forget the most basic groups: the families. Volunteering can be an opportunity to bond as well as to serve the community.

Some volunteers are retired and looking to share their experience. Others are students looking to fulfill academic objectives. Volunteers are young, old, men, women, boys, & girls. Whether they show up for wildlife or for themselves, we're pleased that they show up.



Ties that bind...



Dan Hansen takes a well deserved break. Dan and his wife Renee prepared Dutch oven meals for 445 bitterbrush planters this spring. Deeeelicious....



Citizen Scientist observes sage grouse on the lek.



Goose platform, before...



... and after. Thanks, Ken Hulse.



Let us know if this issue has reached you. Call the volunteer coordinator at 208-324-4359.

Hat's Off

Thanksgiving comes in May for our volunteer program. There are so many volunteers to thank it's hard to know where to begin.

How about planting bitterbrush on mule deer winter range for starters? This year, 606 volunteers planted 35,500 plants in support of our Mule Deer Initiative program. Talk about a list of folks—here's the rundown:

SCHOOLS: College of Southern Idaho, and Buhl, Carey, Cassia Alternative, Castleford, Declo, Filer, Gooding, Hagerman, Kimberly, Oakley, Raft River, Shoshone, Twin Falls, Valley, Wendell High Schools; **4-H:** Country Kids, Bridle Brats, Feed 'Em & Eat 'Em, Foothills Lads & Lasses; **SCOUTS:** Troops 159, 175, & 275; **YOUTH GRPS:** Hansen Ward LDS; **CONSERVATION GRPS:** Deer Hunters of Idaho, Mule Deer Foundation, Sportsmen for Fish & Wildlife; **FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS:** The Bishops, Donohos, Randells, Farnworths, Rietkerks, McCaffertys and Montgomerys, as well as Alan Nayman, Danette Pope, DeVere Burton, Don Berdion, Greg Betts, John Helms, Lindsey Messinger, Melanie Cota, Mike Fairchild, Nancy Crump, Ron Hite, and Roxey Owen; **RESERVISTS:** Lanny Ames, Ivan Allred, Gene Wright, Warren Wallace, Cathie Palmer, & Earl Wise (our official photojournalist); **CHEFS:** Dan & Renee Hansen (& family), on behalf of MDF, performed the extraordinary feat of cooking Dutch Oven lunches for over 400 of these volunteers (WOW!).

Volunteers also helped us usher in an important wildlife research project this

spring. 27 Citizen Scientists, including members of the Prairie Falcon Chapter of the Audubon Society, spent 5 weeks collecting data on breeding sage grouse.

The following folks participated in this region-wide effort: Miriam Austin, Bruce Clark, Mike Cothorn, Mark Dease, David Doub, Larry & Claire Drexler, Dave, Carolyn, & Cliff Hanks, Sarah & Ken Harris, Clyde Lay, Lindsey Messinger, Joe & Linda Newbry, Jim Prunty, Julie & Robert Randell, Jeanie Robertson, Karl & Jeff Ruprecht, Randy Smith, Jim VanArk, Pat Weber, Lyndsey Weedop, and Sara Wood.

The data they collected provides a valuable tool for monitoring sage grouse populations in the Magic Valley.

Volunteers have taken on their own projects as well. Ted & Clorinda McBurney (Clorinda is also a Reservist) continue to spend countless hours servicing boats for our fisheries department; Ken Hulse maintained trails and refurbished goose nest platforms at Niagara Springs WMA; Miles King has cleaned and inventoried each one of our Hunter Education firearms, and Mike Fairchild has helped with just about everything under the sun at Hagerman WMA and Hatchery.

And, as usual, our Reservists continue to plug away. Reservist project highlights include boat repair, lek surveys, creel surveys, and wildlife tract support.

This is more than a list of names; it's also a testament to contribution. Thanks, everyone—and Hats Off to you!

Feedback

IF YOU'RE READING THIS ISSUE, PLEASE CONTACT US!

This is our second newsletter, and we'd like to know how many folks actually read it. The first printing generated a few calls, but not a landslide. We want to know if folks are flipping the pages.

Furthermore, what stories, information, or

images would you like to see in this publication? We want *Volunteer News* to be an effective tool, so let us know.

If you've read this, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at **208-324-4359**, or send an email to **epapenberg@idfg.idaho.gov**.

Thanks!

Volunteer Opportunities

Project: Citizen Seed Harvest

What: Collecting bitterbrush seed

Where: Sites throughout the Magic Valley region, to be determined

When: "ON CALL" in July/Aug.*

Project: Youth Fishing Trips

What: Help IDFG staff take kids fishing

Where: Locations throughout the region

When: Several dates available

Project: Creel Survey

What: Survey anglers to determine catch

Where: Locations throughout the region

When: All summer

***The timing of Citizen Seed Harvest will depend on precisely when the seed ripens, which varies year to year.**

****FLEXIBLE dates are those which can be determined, in part, by the groups who wish to participate.**

Project: Feed shed painting

What: Paint elk feed storage sheds

Where: Two locations adjacent to S. Fork, Boise river, and one on Warm Springs Crk.

When: FLEXIBLE after June 20th**

GROUP PROJECT

Project: Nature Mapping Workshop

What: Learn data collection methods for volunteer wildlife projects in Magic Valley

Where: Location dependant on project needs

When: FLEXIBLE after June 20th**

Project: Scott's Access Cleanup

What: Remove refuse from public lands

Where: Jerome, Idaho

When: FLEXIBLE after June 20th**

GROUP PROJECT



25 bitterbrush down, 35,475 to go...

Recipe For a Volunteer Project

A volunteer project has four basic ingredients: mission, material, planning, and participation.

The mission of the Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game is, in a nutshell, to preserve, protect, and perpetuate the state's fish and wildlife resources, as well as to promote and ensure continued opportunity for people to utilize those resources (i.e., hunting, fishing, and trapping). This is the binding ingredient of our recipe.

Material resources are necessary, but adaptable, ingredients. They can come from anyone or anywhere, and may vary with each project.

Planning is like baking time. A great project, as with a great apple pie, might not last long once it's out of the oven. But a lot of preparation goes into those moments of enjoyment.

Participation, by volunteers and IDFG staff, constitutes the active ingredient. People are

the catalysts, mobilizing the resources and applying them to the mission.

Sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? Well, it is...and it isn't. But it's a start, and you can help put it all together.

If you have an idea which fits the mission, or know who might be willing to participate, call the volunteer coordinator to plan a project. Collaboration makes the best recipes.

Participation, by volunteers and IDFG staff, constitutes the active ingredient in a volunteer project.



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Mailing Address Line 2

Mailing Address Line 3

We're on the web!

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/about/volunteer/>

*Preserving, protecting, and perpetuating
Idaho's Fish and Wildlife*

Citizen Seed Harvest

The fittest seedlings come from the fittest seeds.

This spring, 35,500 bitterbrush seedlings were planted as part of our Mule Deer Initiative. Before that could happen, we had to get seed from *somewhere*. Last year's seed was purchased from professionals who collected it in distant locations, after which it was grown into seedlings at Lucky Peak Nursery. We're crossing our fingers in the hopes those seedlings will thrive in their new environments.

If you *really* want good seed, though, you need to look close to home. According to Habitat Manager Mark Fleming, seed is most viable if it grows in its own neighborhood. "The best seedlings are those that have adapted to the sites on which they are planted," said Fleming, "and the only way to find those adaptations are to collect seeds from that location."

And thus a project idea was born. In order to meet the "need for seed," Volunteer Coordinator Ed Papenberg did some homework. For several weeks he talked, read, and wondered about seed collection. And then he wrote.

Specifically, Ed wrote a Grant proposal to the Idaho Native Plant Society in order to secure funds for the construction of 12 hand-held seed collection hoppers. INPS, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in native plants and plant com-

munities, endorsed the idea and promised \$550 of seed money (forgive the pun).

Once the seed hoops are built, the tricky part will begin. You see, bitterbrush seed has an annoying tendency to fall to the ground quickly and with scant warning. In the Magic Valley, that can happen anytime from late June to early August, depending on moisture and elevation. There are signs of the impending drop, but collectors have to be ready at a moments notice to get the seed *after* it ripens but *before* it falls. That means constant checking is required and flexible volunteers are a necessity.



Bitterbrush (purshia tridentate). Soon this plant will go to seed. The seeds, once ripened, can drop at a moment's notice.

And that's where you can help out. We need individuals who are willing to play phone tag and perhaps jump in the car on short notice in the name of habitat restoration. We realize everyone has commitments, and some days it might not fit. But if you would like to learn about native plants and enjoy a little spontaneity, you should call Ed at 208-324-4359.